

VZCZCXRO2104
OO RUEHDE
DE RUEHDM #0541/01 2161539
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 031539Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5240
INFO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE 1456
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 7376
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE 5616
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0911
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 4973
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 3702
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE 0511
RUEHCU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE 1354
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0440
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0781
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0441
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE 8006
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 2193
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI IMMEDIATE 0205
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL IMMEDIATE 0358
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE 1599
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DAMASCUS 000541

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ELA
NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH

EO 12958 DECL: 08/03/2028
TAGS PGOV, PTER, SY, LE, IS
SUBJECT: TOP ASAD SECURITY AIDE ASSASSINATED

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Tim Pounds for reasons 1.4(b,d)

Summary

1. (S/NF) Syrian Presidential security aide Brigadier General Muhammad Sulayman was assassinated by a sniper late on the evening of August 1 i

Details Murky After Official News Blackout

2. (S/NF) On August 3, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz cited "senior sources in Damascus" in reporting Sulayman's assassination on its website, ide

Pointing the SARG Finger

3. (S/NF) As in other recent assassinations in Syria, speculation about who could have done it will likely be rampant. The most obvious suscep

Implications

4. (S/NF) Although officially just a Brigadier General, Sulayman was considered President Asad's top security aide and was known to manage sev
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5. (S/NF) If the SARG were to suspect an Israeli role in the assassination, it may be reluctant to level public accusations as (1) they may nc

6. (S/NF) Although unlikely, elements within the SARG may suspect or allege a U.S. role. Possible responses could include staged demonstrator

Probable Short-term Reaction

7. (S/NF) For now, the most likely default SARG response will be to clamp down on information and say nothing while the various security servi

Comment

8. (S/NF) As press in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region reports Sulayman's assassination, it will be increasingly difficult for the SARG to